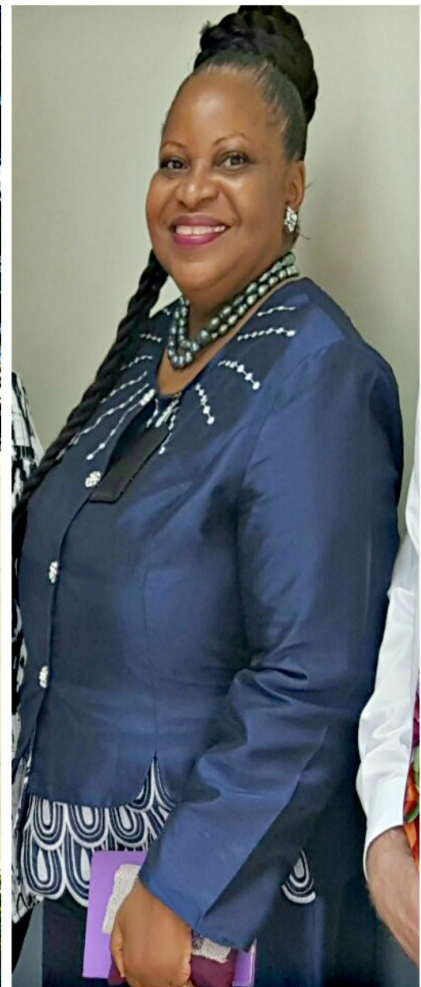


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Nedra Dodds Scandal In Mind, Violet Drafting Legislation Mandating National Criminal Background Checks For All Medical Boards

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ST. CROIX -- Senator Kurt Violet on Friday told The Consortium that he is drafting legislation that would mandate all local medical boards to perform national background checks on all persons or groups looking to practice medicine in the territory, if signed into law. Mr. Violet, frustrated by the [unabating Nedra Dodds scandal](#), also called on the Juan F. Luis Hospital (J.F.L.) human resources department to issue a statement that reassures residents of steps the hospital has taken, if any, to strengthen its vetting process.

On Friday, J.F.L. told The Consortium that it had "no comment" on the scandal that has for many months haunted the hospital.

"We deserve quality care," Mr. Violet said. "And I am expecting that they have put in place a mechanism that would prevent such mistakes from happening again." The senator said he hoped that those responsible for bringing Nedra Dodds to J.F.L. -- who was [recently indicted](#) on felony-murder charges for two patient deaths, and now being held at a Cobb County, Georgia jail -- were no longer at the helm making such decisions.

"You're talking about the people's lives," Mr. Violet went on. "These people come here thinking that the Virgin Islands is a third-world country and feel like they can do whatever they want." While the senator stopped short of calling for the resignation Dr. Mavis Matthew (above right), the hospital's chief medical officer and the person former CEO Kendall Griffith [said](#) brought Dr. Dodds, without his consent, to the hospital, he agreed that people must be held accountable for their decisions if the territory is to move forward in providing services, in all sectors, that meet the highest of standards.

[CBS46 News](#)

Dr. Dodds was indicted on Thursday, January 28 on a felony-murder charge, which carries a mandatory life sentence, as well as other charges, according multiple Georgia news reports, including [CBS46 in Atlanta](#). Her former assistant, Kevin McCowan, was also indicted on felony-murder and other charges.

Consumer investigative reporter Adam Murphy of the CBS affiliate in Atlanta investigated Dr. Dodds, a former model, [for seven months](#) after learning of the deaths of two young women following procedures of liposuction and a buttocks reduction at Dodds' now-defunct [Opulence Aesthetic Medicine](#) practice in Kennesaw, Ga.

The State Medical Board suspended Dr. Dodds' license on Friday, Feb. 28, 2014, saying, "The Board finds that Respondent's continued practice of medicine poses a threat to the public health, safety, and welfare and imperatively requires emergency action and hereby ORDERS that Respondent's license to practice medicine in the state of Georgia be and is hereby SUMMARILY SUSPENDED..."

The report added that Dr. Dodds was board-certified only in emergency care, but not in plastic surgery, the medical practice under which she performed the fatal procedures on the young women. See the Medical Board's full report [here](#).

Virgin Islands Police Department Commissioner Delroy Richards [told Atlanta's CBS 46](#) on Thursday that he would meet with the territory's attorney general and district attorney to determine whether to press charges against Dr. Dodds and possibly J.F.L. officials. At least part of the investigation, if pursued, will seek to determine whether a clause in a contract signed between J.F.L. and Dr. Dodds forbids anyone who has had their license suspended from working at the facility in any capacity. If so, hospital officials involved in the matter could find themselves in a quandary.

CBS 46 contacted the VIPD after becoming aware of The Consortium's [exclusive interview](#) with Dr. Kendall Griffith, former CEO of J.F.L., who was at the helm of the hospital when Dr. Dodds was hired. He told the publication on Tuesday that while he was ultimately held accountable for Dr. Dodds, he was not the one who invited her to work at

the facility, did not know of her before she arrived at J.F.L., and even after initially refusing to hire her, she was already at the hospital without his consent looking at operations.

The former CEO said that as a leader, he “backs up” the decisions of his subordinates, and “if things go well, they get the credit, and if things go bad, I get the blame.” But with the Nedra Dodds issue, in hindsight, “I probably could have been a bit more transparent with what actually happened. But at the time I didn’t think it was necessary because we were trying to build a strong team, be cohesive and trying to bring J.F.L. to the next level,” Dr. Griffith said.

He added: “Let me just clarify, Nedra Dodds was someone I hadn’t met before. I had never met the woman before in my life. I was in the emergency room when the chief of the ER told me about this physician, and that she could help us out with processes and so forth.” Dr. Griffith said he was then told that Dr. Dodds had been having challenges with her practice in Atlanta, and he immediately refused to hire her.

“Immediately I said no. I said I’m not interested. We are too much under the CMS scrutiny to even think about bringing anybody like that into the organization. Then someone called her and told her that the CEO was in the ER, and just when I was in the parking lot getting ready to leave, I was flagged down and told that Dr. Dodds was here.

“So I had a conversation with her, and she confirmed that she had been in our hospital looking at our processes, and think that she could help. She said that she had a thriving practice in Atlanta.” Dr. Griffith said he then asked Dr. Dodds about the issue with her license in Georgia, and she confirmed that some patients had died, however it was her colleague who was responsible for those deaths. “But because I own the practice, my license is being pulled in,” Dr. Griffith said, quoting what Dr. Dodds told him.

He went on to say that at the time, the hospital was working to make the emergency room a paperless operation, but did not have an employee who could perform the task. “So I said, let me discuss it with our chief medical officer, who was the one who brought Nedra Dodds to the hospital.”

“The CMO said it was my decision,” Dr. Griffith recalled. But because Dr. Mathew was the one who brought Dr. Dodds to the hospital, he said he told her that he would trust her judgement. “The contract then showed up on my desk,” Dr. Griffith added. “So the conversation that we had had, was that she would not be licensed to practice; she would not be able to touch any patients — she was simply there to just look at the billing processes.”

Asked directly was it a mistake to hire Dr. Dodds, Dr. Griffith was direct: “Yes, it was a mistake. In hindsight I should have just left that one alone.” Dr. Griffith said he later asked his CMO who was Dr. Dodds and how did she come to St. Croix, and was told that he was sent an email detailing her past.

“I left it alone, but I thought, something like that warrants a discussion; and an email was not good enough.” And while Dr. Griffith admitted that he should have been more forthcoming, “I was just trying to be leader. I was trying to backup my colleagues, and to me, that’s what a leader does. You are in charge, you are at the helm, and that’s what

you do. When things are bad you take the brunt of it, and when things are good, you give your subordinates the glory, and that's what I did.

"But that was one of the most difficult challenges of not only of my CEO tenure, but of my life."

Dr. Dodds has been in custody at the Cobb County, Georgia jail for seven days. According to the Cobb district attorney, no bound hearing has been set for Dr. Dodds, and she had no legal representation on file as of Thursday evening, according to CBS 46.